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ABSTRACT

The positive and negative aspects of using film as a medium for inducing change in developing nations are explored in this issue. Critics of the use of film for development cite (1) the culture specific nature of film content of foreign produced films; (2) the technical, economic, and logistical problems of in-country production; and (3) lack of visual literacy among rural audiences. Proponents of film for development respond that film has greater impact than simpler media, that visual literacy is rapidly being developed, and that new technology already offers possibilities for lower cost and decentralized film and videotape production. Current uses of film in developing nations are described. (STS)

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FILM IN DEVELOPMENT

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Film in Development

Since its invention in the West at the turn of the century, the motion picture medium has spread around the globe. Today, feature films entertain urban crowds in cinemas from Asuncion to Lusaka to Manila. Filmed television programming informs and entertains urban audiences in all the Latin American countries, and in all but 33 of the countries of Africa and Asia. Documentary, educational and development films are projected before rural and urban audiences alike. While these forms of film communication do not rival the reach of radio as a mass medium, they do have an important effect.

In the past, many Western film-makers saw their craft as the best communication medium for stimulating development. They believed that films distributed through cinemas and television could create an appetite among urban populations for change and modernization. Development films projected by mobile film vans could break the literacy barrier and communicate with uneducated peasant masses. Film was "culture-free" communication. Film was the universal language. Film was visual reality.

Today, all these beliefs are being challenged. Film is now recognized as a very selective filter of reality, which is culture-bound in both style and content. Global film economics have dictated that small nonindustrial countries import most of their films from rich countries. Critics have alleged that such foreign films are at best irrelevant to development and at worst detrimental.

Critics contend that foreign films glorify affluent foreign lifestyles, alienate urban audiences from their own reality, and thus undermine development goals. Rural audiences, it is maintained, simply fail to understand such films until they attain "visual literacy".

Many countries which have tried to make and distribute their own films have encountered massive technical, economic and logistical problems. As a result, important voices in the field of communication and development have asked whether simpler, cheaper media such as slides, posters, audio cassettes and radio are not better suited for local production and for application to development problems.

Proponents of film counter that their medium has greater realism, power and impact than the simpler media. Film is motion. Film is sight and sound combined, they reply. Furthermore, the mass audience for film is expanding rapidly, as television moves outward from the capital cities and downward from the elite classes. Advances in 8mm film and narrow gauge video equipment already offer untapped possibilities for lower-cost and decentralized production for television.

It is against this backdrop of change and confusion regarding the role of film in development, that editor Randall H. Casey presents a range of opinions and observations on the topic.

Jock Gunter
Director, ICIT

Fuglesang Comments on Filmmaking

The Information Center is pleased to have the opportunity to feature an interview with Andreas Fuglesang, the Senior Information Officer for the United Nations conference on human habitations, HABITAT. In discussing the role of film in development the importance of how people perceive the languages of film and visualize information cannot be emphasized enough. Mr. Fuglesang has spent nine years in rural areas of Ethiopia and Zambia and understands well how people perceive information within their cultural context. This interview was conducted by Randall H. Casey, Editor of ICIT Report.

As background in this interview Andreas Fuglesang made an important statement about the ability of rural people to visualize information. Because of his many years of experience in isolated rural areas of developing countries Fuglesang knows that very little true development occurs without participation of the people.

We are talking about film and pictorial media in development work. I think it is very important to remember and to be aware of the special qualities which one often finds among the people of traditional society. In the village, the most powerful instrument is memory. The whole culture is carried on through memory and through the verbal tradition. Working in the village is a remarkable thing because one can give just a short verbal explanation of something and people are capable of seeing this in their head. They project what they see in front of them and they really see it so clearly in every detail that they just do not forget anything. Old people in the village have this enormous computer-like ability to perceive and remember details and to relate them to each other. I think this is something that is very important when we talk about the use of visual or pictorial media in relation to these people because they have this capacity for seeing. Now if we do not use visual media in a way that stimulates this capacity then we are not using them in the right way.

• *Is film playing much of a role in societies which are in the process of modernization?* I would not say that it is playing a great role. I would say that it may play a great role. When somebody tells me that film is the greatest medium for development purposes, in spite of the fact that I am some sort of a film-maker myself, I do not believe it. I believe that there are motivations behind such statements which are partly economic and partly political in nature.

• *What are some factors that are limiting film's role in development?* In many countries there is a certain establishment for the production and distribution of film. When one looks into it the biggest problem is really distribution because the system to carry the message via film is not there. Some places have an information service and have an information landrover for each province. Now that does not give very much of an exposure to film.

Film is not an automatic communicator. I think that there is a certain skill required if films are to be useful. There is a skill in learning how to extract information from films. Film is like any sensory stimulation, it passes by you and if your attention is not directed toward certain elements, you do not see them. In my experience, film turns out to be useful if it is integrated with interpersonal communication — in study circles or in connection with extension workers.

• *Within the film-making community one often hears that film is a universal language. From your own experience do you agree with that?* That is again a concept which serves the purpose of promoting the film-makers and not necessarily the use of film. I think that is flatly wrong. If we agree that film is a visual language, film is then subjected to the same analysis as any other language. And I think that linguists are generally in agreement that language is basically a system of conventions. And I feel that it is the same in film-making. I agree that there are certain notions in film-making which probably have some perceptual justification — for instance, the whole notion of continuity of long distance, medium and close-up shots. But I still think that there are many modifications to be made if one works in relation to audiences where there is a great pictorial illiteracy. This concept is grossly misunderstood and it stretches much wider than just being unable to read or write. Paulo Freire has eminently proved that ultimately it is a question of conscientization and in that process you can see it as a continuum. How to interpret what one sees depends on exposure to certain kinds of stimulation. The more one is exposed to certain types of pictorial information, the better able one is to interpret it.

• *How can films be made more effective for "visual illiterates" who are not familiar with the conventions of film?* Well, I think that there remains to be done a number of practical studies. The situation now is such that one should never recommend research because so much scholarly research has been done which has never been used, but I believe that certain kinds of operational research or simply field experiments are needed. Some experiments remain to be done regarding what pictorial language one should use in relation to the village. This has to do with the type of continuity, the pacing of film speed as it goes through the projector or the way you lay the picture out on your frame, on your viewer — how do you construct such a picture. There is good reason to believe, for instance, that if you use a neutral background, by eliminating details which are not significant for what you want to say, you can promote a better perception of what is happening.

I think, for instance, that one could use to greater advantage techniques like freezing of frames so that a frame is left longer for people to see and understand the information. It is in fact very difficult when you think of it to follow moving pictorial information. And these are the areas where we could do some work. Since film is moving information, I do not think that color is very essential. Studies have been done proving that color did not make any difference because people did not notice that the black and white did not have color. Of course there are situations where color has a distinct identification value — use color for that.

• *Can the use of animation serve a purpose in reaching visual illiterates?* On the whole the use of animation is a typical example of how a visual convention develops. Animators have agreed that, for instance, the use of dotted lines for illustrating how diseases travel is the way this notion will be represented. But for people who do not know this visual convention, the dotted lines are total nonsense. I think that to overcome this problem is simply to avoid the kind of animation gimmick that does not really have tutorial purpose. We think animation has such a purpose but concepts can be expressed other ways. Secondly, if animators cannot explain the concept in any other way, then I think animation should be used. But one must have ample time to explain to people what it is. People are very fast understanding something when it is properly explained to them. The mistake is that animators assume that people immediately understand just because they themselves do.

• *Are there film-makers who systematically learn about their audiences before making a film?* Let us hope so. Some film-makers live under the assumption that they are enormously sensitive, and that may be so. I must say that personally I have not seen too many examples. I think that the ideal film-maker in an educational context is the person who is absolutely nonexistent in the sense that he perceives himself only as a part of the technology.

• *Are you familiar with the Skyriver project in Alaska* of the Challenge for Change projects in Canada?* Yes. There are two aspects to educational film-making. One is this purely perceptual side which deals with pictorial concept formation and with the actual criteria or the actual conditions in the audience to which one has to pay regard. Then you have the film that is used as an agent for social change, simply as a tool for communication between the local community and the government authorities and as a means to conscientization in the community.

• *How are film-makers themselves responding to this kind of film-making?* I cannot say for sure but I have met a lot of very interested people who recognize the potential of this approach. But I think that one should be aware that there is a mystique around film-making. And people who are in it tend to exploit that mystique. You have a professional terminology which very few understand and one can very easily psychologically exploit that kind of thing because it gives you an advantage. Film-making like any other profession is suffering from a lot of professional prejudices. Very often progress within a professional field comes from the fringes and not from the center because it is the establishment. The real renewal of film-making might come from much more serious work with the related fields of anthropology, sociology and development work where functional films can become more apparent in making film something that really has value in terms of improving quality of life for people.

• *How important to development is it that people make their own films?* The problem with film is obviously that it is fairly complicated technology. In most situations one probably would get more out of it if there were a professional film-maker involved who could see that the technology was taken care of but who was not interfering with the conceptual and the editorial processes. That might be very difficult, but on the other hand, one must keep on trying.

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*The Skyriver project was featured in ITR issue of March 1974 and July-August 1974, available upon request from ICIT.

• *What role do you see super 8 film playing?* If it is to play a role, I think it is extremely important to introduce it into the existing extension structures of community development, agricultural extension, public health services, etc. It is, however, an absolute condition to have a certain commercial establishment that can reliably service and maintain the equipment. That is why I think that the simpler means like printed charts are the things that need to be used. In any development situation you have to act pragmatically on the opportunities that you have and it is not a question of picking one medium instead of another, it is a question of using what you have.

• *Why is it so difficult for people to defend themselves against technology salesmen who come with all the answers?* Well, people who find themselves in this situation do so, I think, because they did not define their objectives properly. I think, also, that this kind of thing happens often because people feel that everybody else has it, so they must have it too.

• *What about the role of the foreigners in film-making? Do they have a role to play at this time, say in Africa, or are they just getting in the way?* There is a role for them to train local film-makers in mastering the pure technology, but you just cannot train someone to make films. Local film-makers have to make films and they have to make a lot of bad films before they can make good films. They have to learn by experience. This is not happening because there are so many foreigners and because governments themselves pick up a foreigner to do a flashy presentation or prestigious film. Local professionals will only learn by making mistakes; it will cost money — but there is no other way of doing it. Luckily there are many young gifted national producers who are emerging. ■

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The Uppsala Workshop

A landmark conference on the use of film in development was held by the Dag Hammarksjöld Foundation in Uppsala, Sweden in October 1974. The meeting was the third in a series of seminars on applied communication. ICIT considers the workshop report, "Film-making in Developing Countries: The Uppsala Workshop" to be required reading for those concerned with applying film in development work.

In the words of workshop director Andreas Fuglesang, the workshop's purpose was to begin a "questioning process" made necessary by changes in world communication: "The ever growing presence of the electronic picture makes the process one of urgency. The arrival of video equipment is a challenge to the whole concept of professional film-making. Are our perceptions of the social significance of film and film-making in developing — or industrialized — countries adequate any longer?"

The workshop report does not contain rules of thumb or easy answers. Nor does it deal with film in abstract or theoretical terms. Rather, the book aims to assist practitioners — researchers, scriptwriters, directors, cameramen — in solving the practical problems of visualizing the educational message and shaping the film image to a meaningful development tool for their own social environment.

Sven Hamrell, Executive Director of The Dag Hammarksjöld Foundation, expressed in his introduction to the report his concern for participatory communication, a concept talked about but rarely practiced. Up to now the field of social communication has been dominated by the manipulative outlook. Theory and practice have focused on the effects of media: opinion polls, measuring knowledge levels and change of attitudes. Little emphasis has been placed on the social function and psychology of communication: production of creative and engaging programs. Hamrell recognizes that programming for participation is yet to come. Various forms of mass media and people interaction have been tested, i.e. radio farm forums, Sesame Street and some adult and children's programs by the BBC. Developing countries "must look in this direction if they want a meaningful function for radio, film or TV." Donor agencies "cannot in the long run be expected to participate in the financing of communication hardware which only serves the purpose of consolidating the ruling information monopolies and possibly of fortifying the fiefdoms of the local TV celebrities among the elite." Experts are learning that village proples have a "fair idea" of their development problems, can express them well and be innovative in solving them. So Hamrell believes that "film and TV have great potential for involvement of the people, but only if a social language in the widest sense can be developed. This requires a considerable amount of sensitivity and creative effort."

Participants in the workshop came from Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Zambia, and are leading figures in national film and TV industries at their homes. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences allowed for a most useful exchange of information and ideas. Key resource persons and lecturers participated with the workshop members and provided a rare occasion for professionals from many parts of the world to meet and discuss problems and goals, share experiences and bring forth new strategies. Following are excerpts from some of the key presentations to the workshop.

David Giltrow on Film Research and Field Testing.

There are several film evaluation dilemmas. The main theme is: only our target audience can tell us if we have communicated the images and ideas which we intended.

Dilemma No. 1:
Film-makers make films for other film-makers.

Dilemma No. 2:
Film-makers are not trained nor disposed to evaluation.

Dilemma No. 3:
Each film is a new message which requires new evaluation.

Dilemma No. 4:
We know very little about film literacy or what that term means.

Dilemma No. 5:
Liking a film does not necessarily mean that the viewer learns from the film.

Dilemma No. 6:
Some research evidence together with new film-making tools suggests that many films could be made by interested amateurs, including school children.

Dilemma No. 7:
Film language would be different if the effect of culture was not overridden by rules developed by film-makers.

Dilemma No. 8:
The film-maker who deals with political issues will always make the most powerful films but also experience the consequences of using power.

Dilemma No. 9:
The most difficult part of film-making is defining the purpose of the film and translating that into an effective film statement.

"Obviously a film is more effective when a film-maker takes into consideration the reaction of his audience. When possible, pre-test, but if a film is too expensive, bring in the advice of different film users — the people who actually project the film in the villages. Films that are made in consultation with the actual film users are more effective."
(Segun Olusola)

Dilemma No. 10:
The cost of making a film is not related to how much that film is communicating the intended message.

Dilemma No. 11:
Our research capacity is severely limited by our lack of basic knowledge and theory.

Dilemma No. 12:
The role of the cinema in the development process has yet to be defined in a way which considers costs, effect, alternate ways of production, evaluation, purposes and "creativity".

Joseph Mahiga on Technical Education Problems and Needs.

In our discussions about film, development and education, the most crucial thing is the message and its presentation and the impact on the target audience. We have to lay greater emphasis on this than on the film itself as a technical tool. Viewing an educational film is like attending a lesson in class. The success of that lesson will depend very much on the orderly, logical and pedagogical presentation of the teacher.

I would like to discuss some of the problems and needs as well as some of the controversies which surround the film in development work in Tanzania and Africa, and also how film production on this continent should be revolutionized so that it can be used to support development change and rural transformation. What is urgently needed now is to train educational technologists to initiate innovation in teaching strategies at all levels of education. Massive research programs should also be undertaken to find out what most people really want at the moment.

There are problems about the use of film for development work. Problem number one is the lack of local, qualified technical and professional personnel. The need to train Tanzanians and Africans in general to produce films for Africa is now very pressing and the time is ripe for the necessary change. In comparison, the technical problems are marginal.

The other problem facing both the foreign and the local producer is how to use the educational film as a means of effective communication in supporting development programs. In most cases the film producers include in the script what they themselves as experts deem fit. They neglect to explore thoroughly the background information on the target audience for which the project is intended. This is a gross and serious mistake. It is this very factor which often leads to the collapse of government projects. A film to support a certain development project is normally produced for a specific target audience, whose social, cultural and political, as well as educational and economic characteristics therefore need to be explored.

Many film producers tend to fall back on what Paulo Freire calls the "Banking Method of Education." The teacher knows everything and the student knows nothing. Freire suggests that for the student to understand the teacher, the teacher himself has to become a student. Teacher and students become students and teachers at the same time. It is only through this technique that a film-maker can tailor his message to suit the target audience.

We should not make films to please administrators. We should make films which help people to start tackling development problems stage by stage. Then we must explore the people's needs before we decide what films to make.

"There are aid programmes that have come to nothing. I think the emphasis has been on the donation of equipment more than on help to train individuals in the profession. I would have thought the training of individuals came first and that the equipment and studios followed, but it has been the reverse."
(Kassaye Demena)

Colin Low on The Film as a Social Mirror.

The "Challenge for Change" program of the National Film Board of Canada started in 1967 as an initiative designed to create better communication among different social levels and to provoke social change. Film is used as a medium to develop group awareness and as an agent in a community development process.

Communities characterized by varying degrees of illiteracy, lack of material resources, etc. are confronted with a changing environment which demands response and adaptation.

In the various projects I have been involved in — on Fogo Island, for instance — I have seen surprising and unpredictable group responses to the playback of material that belonged to the group or was of direct interest to it. I became convinced that this mirror effect had a profound influence on individual awareness and group awareness. Perhaps small groups using the mirror effect of media will develop an understanding of communication as a two-way process.

The problem of the Fogo communities in 1967 was that they could not keep pace with a changing environment. The economy of these communities along the Newfoundland coast is based on fishing. But in those days there were no marketing facilities for the catch and there was no organization of development efforts. The productivity was also low because people practiced old-fashioned fishing methods. Most of the people were welfare-supported and the provincial government considered resettlement as the only solution. A community development worker was at this stage trying to involve people in setting up a development committee, but there were difficulties in religious differences and lack of communication between the communities. On the other hand there were also dynamic elements in the situation. People were fond of their homesteads and the islands, tied as they were to them through 300 years of history. The people wanted to remain there.

By filming the people in discussions about their own community's development problems and projecting back to them their own films, our objective was to generate confidence in the inhabitants so that they could formulate and express the problems as they saw them. We regarded the expression of problems as the first step towards solving them. Screening the films to the community revealed contradictory attitudes both in individuals and in groups — and this screening situation itself provided a forum for changes of attitude through real participation. In this participation there was the potential for creative problem-solution. The whole community became involved in a process of self-analysis and problem-solving.

Two-way communication between the islanders and the provincial government was opened up. Films were screened to the appropriate authorities and their responses and comments were filmed and brought back to the island for screening there. In this way the local people gradually became involved in the planning and decision-making for their own community. It is a very important point that the islanders were given complete control over their films. This process resulted in direct collaboration between the provincial government and the islanders. The filming enlarged the consensus on the island and brought forward the leaders. The development committee was given concrete help to start a boat-building cooperative, a fish plant and other activities.

One must always bear in mind that working in communities with issues of this nature requires both sensitivity and cautiousness. Film or video can exacerbate a situation beyond repair. This is likely to happen if the practitioners do not adopt a few rules, which are a little more than basic etiquette. There are two basic rules as far as I am concerned: The right of the subject to editorial participation, and the right of the subject to receive a response.

Workshop Guide Lines

- A *centralized body* should be formed in every developing country to promote and coordinate film production and to decide priorities. The establishment of such a body will prevent duplication and will ensure optimal utilization of resources.
- Films should always be made in consultation of the *film-users*, and where possible material should be *pre-tested* in the field at various stages of scripting and production. *Post-screening evaluation* should be standard professional practice.
- Before any film production is undertaken, thorough *research* should be carried out regarding the cultural, educational and social background of the *target audience*, and possible problems of *visual perception* should be investigated. In this way film-makers will be able to maximize perception, comprehension and retention of the educational message.
- Third World film-makers should not feel inhibited or be deterred by comparing their work with the products of the industrialized countries; rather they should aim at producing materials meaningful and *relevant* to their own people.
- Copies of all films in a country should be collected in a central distribution *library* and should be listed in a regularly updated central catalogue, to ensure wide distribution.
- Whenever planning to make use of films on a wide scale, countries should as a priority establish regional or central *maintenance workshops* for the repair of projectors and mobile vans, and they should ensure the efficient supply of spare parts.
- A qualified extension worker as well as a trained commentator should accompany the driver/projectionist when mobile vans are utilized. Effective utilization of films depends on the *method of presentation* and the follow-up work carried out.
- If a film is not economically viable, alternative media (e.g. film strips, radio, slides, drama, portable VTR) should be considered. If possible, films should be integrated with other media in *campaigns* and in the overall educational effort.
- Film-makers should protect their *professional integrity* and demonstrate their commitment by putting their name on the credit titles of all films.
- In order to facilitate the flow of technical knowledge between industrialized and developing countries, foreign film-makers should always collaborate fully with national film-makers to the mutual benefit of both — the foreign film-makers will be able to present the true cultural perspective and give an unbiased representation of information.
- An *association* should be established to serve educational film and TV producers in English-speaking African countries, provisionally called the [illegible]r-African Association of Educational Film and TV Producers.

The complete report is available from the Dag Hammarksjöld Foundation, Ovre Slottsgatan 2, S-752 20 Uppsala Sweden. The cost is 40 Krona by air mail and 30 Krona by surface mail.

An excellent summary of this workshop was done by Jim Potts, British Council Educational Broadcasting Officer, Kenya. His article appears in Educational Broadcasting International, March 1975, pages 15-19.

An important document for those interested with the production and use of films in development: Films of a Changing World/A Critical International Guide *by Dr. Jean-Marie Ackerman, available from the Society for International Development, 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, U.S.A.* ■ R.H.C.

African Cinema

Our concentration in this issue of *ICIT Report* has been on the use of film for educational and developmental purposes. We would be remiss, however, if we neglected to discuss the traditional role of film in art and entertainment: cinema. Cinema can and does play an important part in the developing countries in terms of historical, cultural and artistic expression.

Yet, there are problems. In Africa several factors are working against the establishment of an independent cinema, free from economic and technical dependence. One major reason hindering this independence is the amount of outside control of distribution channels. Foreign dominated distributors can obtain Western films that have earned enough money to cover initial production costs. Thus, the distributors reap a much larger profit with these films than they can with first-run African films whose production costs are still unpaid. As a result of this, the film-viewing public has become accustomed to seeing films with Western themes and seems indifferent to other forms of cinema, even African. And finally, where there is an audience, public leaders are hesitant to subsidize film-makers who might produce films critical of their policies.

It is an uphill battle. But in spite of these significant obstacles, the African film industry is expanding. Below are the views of three distinguished African film-makers as they consider the past and future of African cinema.

Paulin Vieyra, *Benin, author and producer of 30 documentary films, discusses the now-increasing growth of the film-making industry in Africa and looks at the functions it must fulfill in serving African people.*

Film-making in Africa south of the Sahara is a new industry, born of independence. In Europe, the cinema began to develop on a national level in the 1920's, but Africa had to wait, because every truly national creative effort is conditioned by national sovereignty. The history of the cinema demonstrates that no African film of any significant value could have been made during the colonial period. In fact, it is largely because Africans have now begun to produce films about Africa that Africa has been discovered through films.

It is important that films about Africa are being made by Africans. The African sensitivity is entirely different from the European or American sensitivity. We have a view of things that is completely different from that of the West. Each person sees things according to his own background and culture. The world in which the African film-maker lives gives him a vision of Africa which is not exotic, not foreign, but uniquely "African" in cultural content.

Many of today's leading African film producers began their education before independence at Europe's great schools of cinematography. But for several years now, African countries have made a strong effort to develop a cinematographic structure of their own, modest though it may be. To make good films, it isn't necessary to be graduated from a great school. When you have ideas, you

can make films. The film industry has been able to grow more rapidly in those countries, particularly in French-speaking Africa, where television did not get started first and mobilize available resources first. In the English-speaking countries where television was established early, the cinema has been slower to advance.

In Africa, art is not created for art's sake. It is functional art — art with a message. The film-maker wants his art to say something, to offer an element to the public he is addressing. Whether he is a sculptor, a singer or a story teller, the African creator knows where his work is directed. African cinematographic productions are rediscovering these traditions.

At the stage we're in now, the cinema is a tool — a tool that the film-maker must employ in the service of the people. In order for our cinema to be totally African, it must provide an outlet for African expression — thematically and aesthetically as well as linguistically.

Ababacar Samb, *Senegal, film producer and secretary general of the Pan-African Federation of Film-makers, discusses the importance of nationalism in African films.*

At the moment, the African cinema is nationalistic. It is a cinema that focuses thematically on two major African problems — the cultural alienation of the African under colonial rule and the rise of nationalism as he becomes aware of his own individuality, of his Africanness. This is an important function, because films hold a significant place in the education of the African, much more crucial than that of literature in the sense that the cinema's effect is immediate. It automatically influences the spectator's behaviour and he is often not even conscious of it. I think the African film producer must assume this educational mission. As long as Africa does not solve the problem of alienation which has lasted for 300 years, she cannot move forward.

I want to make what I call functional films — whether they are on a social, cultural or political plane. They must be films that are for the masses of which I am a part and from which I came. I want to make films that spring from my own culture with an explosive effect, films that have a universal character and yet at the same time preserve their special, nationalistic roots. I am not interested in making the kind of films Westerners make, because I think we must be inspired by our own cultural tradition and produce films which acknowledge these cultural distinctions yet have a universal dimension.

One of the major challenges to our film producers is to help the African nations in seeking unity, both at the regional and continental level. But the people of one country do not know those of the others. We feel that through the cinema we will get to know each other better. If people in each African country can see the films from other countries, I think the unity toward which we are all heading will be greatly accelerated.

Ousmane Sembene, *Senegal, called Black Africa's greatest film producer, speaks about film as a tool for social change.*

It is the artist's role to orient and awaken consciences. It is not for the creator, especially at the level of films, to create to please; he must create in order to pose problems to his society. The artist gives of himself through his awareness of his own people. The film must be an education, an enlightenment. A film is but a driving-belt, a vehicle that conveys an idea.

My films aim to awaken the conscience of the African people, and to present the situation the African finds himself in. I want to show Africans some of the deplorable conditions under which they themselves live. When one creates, one doesn't think of the world; one thinks of his own country. It is, after all, the Africans who will ultimately bring change in Africa. The main thing for me is to steer people into taking a stand — not because they are black but because they are humans confronted with human problems.

There is a new generation of film-makers emerging in Africa, waiting to express themselves. Each generation must tackle its own problems. It is in this new generation that we will see the birth of a true African cinema. ■

These opinions were first presented in the magazine Topic *issue Number 70, published by the United States Information Agency for distribution in Africa.*

Cheap & Easy

This is the second in a series of articles which outlines inexpensive and easily produced A-V materials and techniques.

— FREE STANDING EXHIBIT

Exhibits are both instructional and attractive when used in schools, market places, window displays or large meetings.

— MATERIALS

1. Materials desired for display: maps, photos, magazine pictures etc.
2. Cardboard, plywood, or masonite, cut into equal-size squares.
3. Mounting materials: rubber cement or glue.
4. Preserving materials: cleared x-ray film (available from hospitals at low or no cost), acetate, or contact paper.

— PROCEDURE

1. Brush rubber cement or glue on materials to be mounted.
2. Place materials on exhibit squares. Rub down firmly.
3. Place cleared x-ray film, acetate or contact paper over mounted material. If x-ray film or acetate is used, tape around edges with masking tape.
4. Cut slits in the top and bottom of each square. Fit the squares together as shown in the illustration to the right.

HINT: Use bright colors, BOLD letters and large images whenever possible.

Linda Lavin & Rosemary Nicholls

CORRECTION: in January's "Cheap & Easy" column, steps 2 and 3 were inadvertently reversed.

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Television Goes North: What About the Inuit?

The Inuit (Eskimo) people of Northern Canada traditionally hunted, trapped, and lived off the land. After the arrival in the North of white Europeans with their technology and life styles, the Inuit's way of life began to collapse. In the following article Peter Reymont of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) writes about the introduction of television (via satellite) to Inuit communities and the lack of control the Inuit have over it. He describes briefly the role of the NFB in running film workshops in the North and one of the Inuit films produced for the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), both of which are efforts to help Inuit become involved in the growth and production of television. This article is a condensed version of the one which Reymont submitted to the Canadian publication, *Potpourri*.

I think it will take some time for the Inuit to discover the potential power of film, and how it can be used as a political tool. The fact is that their experience with communications technology is extremely limited but is changing with great speed.

My generation grew up with television. Recently Cape Dorset, Pond Inlet, Povungnetuk and other settlements in the Arctic connected into the television network of Canada. Each day now Canadian and American entertainment and sports programs become part of these people's daily experience.

The hope of the NFB in planning and setting up film-making workshops was to equip the Inuit with the techniques to gain some control of television. We felt that by giving them the basic tools of film production, they might find ways to use the media for their own purposes.

In retrospect now, after three years of the Animation Workshop in Cape Dorset and one and a half years of the Super 8 Workshop in Frobisher Bay, I still feel this philosophy is sound, but we miscalculated the time necessary for the use of film to take hold and we made several critical mistakes in presenting the techniques.

The Inuit people of Baffin Island are, for the most part, naive of the dominant culture in the South. Even in Cape Dorset, Baffin Island, where the Art Co-operative has been a pervasive influence for over twenty years, change has been moderately paced by the standards in southern Canada. While there are only a handful of white government employees, teachers, store workers, police and administrators in the North, they manage the institutions they have created — the Hudson Bay Company, church, school and government. This leaves them reasonably free to hunt, carve stone and live on credit.

Just as the motorized sleigh brought the beginning of the end of the Inuit's physical culture of hunting, television could mark the destruction of their spiritual culture. At present, few Inuit are aware of this danger or know what to do. Only one Inuit settlement, Igloolik, voted to opt out of the CBC's plans to bring Southern programming into every Inuit home. The cultural destruction was obviously not planned. Rather, it was the result of well-meaning decision makers within the government bureaucracy. The Anik satellite (which relays programming from Toronto and Vancouver into the Arctic) costs Canadians over $70 million. The oversight is that not one cent was budgeted for Northern programming.

Many Inuit, not understanding the threat television presently represents, have even more difficulty comprehending the need to organize against it. But as the Southern media continue to undermine the cultural practices of the North, the importance of understanding and having access to the media will become more essential.

The Frobisher Bay Super 8mm Workshop is now producing a 15 minute/week television program — Nunatsiarmiut. It is the first time the Inuit have had the chance to use the media for themselves.

The Film Board must continue to encourage and support this project. We now have a commitment to the Inuit and, as they learn to use film and video, our support will have to grow with their enthusiasm.

The North can be viewed as a kind of microcosm of our whole North American society. All the ingredients are present — a politically naive people, a beautiful and rich environment, encroaching industrial development. At stake is far more than the spirit and culture of the Inuit.

Natsik Hunting

This film was shot by a twenty-five year old Inuit, Mosha Michael, in early June of 1974 during a five day seal hunting trip with a group of friends down Frobisher Bay.

Mosha used a portable super 8 mm camera and shot at 24 frames per second (fps). All footage at the workshop is shot at 24 fps so it can be blown up to 16mm without the effect of speeded-up motion.

The footage was shot silent, and, after it was edited by Mosha in Frobisher, a magnetic edge stripe was added to the film and it was sent to the NFB in Montreal for blow up to 16mm. The music and sound effects were recorded in Frobisher Bay and transferred to the magnetic sound track of an 8mm sound projector.

Mosha himself was in Montreal to supervise the fine trimming of the 16mm cutting copy, the sound mix, and the color correction and timing of the picture. Editing took place over several months.

This film was the first time Mosha had used a motion picture camera. I initially showed him the rudiments of the camera, use of a tripod, tape recorder, projector and editing equipment. The rest was the result of his own intuitive sense and creativity.

The film is released in both English and Inuktituk, with an explanation at the beginning of how the film was made. A traditional Inuit song, sung and played by Mosha and a friend, accompanies the film. Screening the film always elicits a major response. The Southern audiences are often taken aback by the bloody slitting open and immediate consumption of a freshly killed seal. For them a seal is a beautiful, peaceful animal. For Northern audiences, the seal is food, and the film is a celebration of a successful hunting expedition. The scenes of cutting open the seal and sampling some fresh meat are accompanied by 'mmm's and 'ah's', especially from the younger children.

The film has been distributed to NFB offices throughout the country, and will be televised on the CBC Northern Service. In the South, the film will be of major interest to students of film, communications, and Northern studies in elementary, high school or university. In the North, the film stands as a major achievement. It is the first live-action film directed and photographed by an Inuit, it is the first product of the NFB's Super 8mm Film Workshop, and it is a pioneering step toward Inuit film production in the Arctic. ■

The Information Center on Non-Formal Education, Program of Studies in Non-Formal Education, Michigan State University carries on a series of activities to assist in the formation of a systematic knowledge basis for researchers, program developers and practitioners. It maintains a reference library as a depository for reports, surveys, papers and studies on non-formal education. It publishes and distributes worldwide information on non-formal education. It identifies references and resource persons on topics of interest to persons in the field. It publishes a newsletter, The *NFE Exchange*. These services are available upon request without cost through a grant from the United States Agency for International Development. To utilize the center or obtain a list of publications currently in print write to:

Director
Information Center on
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Commitment Plus Equipment

Under the auspices of the Canadian International Development Agency (C.I.D.A.) and at the request of the government of Ghana, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) sent a team of film-makers to Ghana in 1971 to conduct a seven-week film and visual aids workshop. A member of the four-man team was Kenneth McCready, a film-maker at the National Film Board.

In the following article are some of the main points and ideas expressed by Mr. McCready on the workshop and about technical assistance in general to Randall Casey, Editor of *ICIT Report*, during a recent interview in Montreal.

The Workshop was a seven-week effort to train local people to produce visual aids for the Ghana National Family Planning Program (N.F.P.P.). The group of trainees was drawn from various ministries that were involved in some phase of family planning. Many of these people had little or no previous experience in producing audio-visuals and were exposed to a range of picture making techniques — from simple stills and slides to film animation. Each participant learned how to make 35mm slides and film strips, to use super 8 film cameras, to do simple animation techniques from paper cut outs and to process black & white and color slides. All equipment was supplied by C.I.D.A. through the Canadian Film Board.

At the end of the training course, four Ghanians were selected to stay with the N.F.P.P. in the Materials Production Unit (M.P.U.) which was formed as a result of the success of the workshop.

This experience has convinced McCready of the great utility of such small production units, and, further, that once a donating agency becomes involved in such a project, it must make a long-term and technically detailed commitment. McCready stated for example that the N.F.P.P. had two 16mm projectors which had been donated by another agency a while ago. The Film Board people discovered that the projectors were still in their original packing cases and that one was without a projecting lens and both were minus projecting lamps. Too often donor countries fail to appreciate the great importance of making provision for spare parts, maintenance, and the continuing supply of expendible materials. An inability to understand this need creates more distrust of techniques than it does to advance them. Aid of this sort, if it is to be effective, must contain a long-term commitment and an indefinite one if necessary. In the case of the Family Planning Program's M.P.U. the annual cost of providing spare parts, chemicals, and film-stock would be under $1,000 at the present scale of operation, a small fraction of the initial investment.

Such long-term commitments by donors are essential because most developing nations find it difficult to allocate hard currency to an operation which is new to them and which is inherently difficult to evaluate. They already have established what, understandably, appear to them to be greater priorities.

It is felt that the M.P.U. has now proved its usefulness to the National Family Planning Program because the N.F.P.P. is now expanding the M.P.U. and acquiring extra staff. Most of its work has so far been concentrated on the production of stills, slides and sound slide shows. The space available to the M.P.U. has now been doubled, reprographic facilities have been added and it appears that the M.P.U. could soon function in the broad area of A-Vs that was originally planned.

McCready underlined some other major points which he feels have emerged from the experience. There is the problem of resolving the paradox that while people in developing countries often have strong visual faculties, they must orient themselves to audio-visuals and not regard them as luxuries.

There is also a very real need to draw up a long-term program for using audio-visual facilities. By drawing up such a program for each major category — general information programs, special meetings and seminars, field worker training and materials for field use — and establishing priorities and schedules, the chances are better that more A-V materials will be produced and the habit of using the A-V facilities will be enhanced.

Partially as a result of this experience McCready believes that foreign technical personnel should initially advise for short periods of two to three months or so and then come back each year for a month or two for the next four or five years. This would avoid the problems created by having the project dominated by expatriates, but would help to give it the occasional boost and provide an opportunity to evaluate the need for further expansion in equipment and supplies. The usual approach is to have the technical person on location continuously for a year or two and then leave the nationals "to their own devices." This results in too many projects withering away and having no long-term support.

The final point made by Mr. McCready relates to comments made elsewhere in this issue and that is the cultural bias of the visual materials. The value of indigenous A-V material is often seriously underestimated. Some donors consider it redundant and wasteful to produce materials locally when it is easier and cheaper to send out their own available material. These people, McCready feels, fail to understand the seriousness of the phrase "neo-colonialism" and fail to realize the inherent cultural dimensions of all audio-visual material. ■

A Cinematic Language

Film as a tool for development has had an erratic life history in Africa. Basic problems have always existed: lack of money, lack of equipment, lack of trained personnel. But the central problem to be resolved for successful film-making in Africa is this: how much is one to depend on foreign expertise and opinion, and how important is it that films for development come from within the very place they are to serve?

These questions are considered by Jim Potts, an English documentary film-maker and communication researcher, in a study entitled "*Documentaries for Development: A Challenge for Film-makers in Africa*" (Jim Potts, September 1974).

We live in a world with urgent needs. It is also a world full of new technical solutions and possibilities. What is necessary is a proper pairing of needs with solutions. In exploring the role of film in development, Potts identifies its most effective areas. "Films and mobile units should be used to support precise development objectives in places where the need is identified or where a project is being implemented." That is, films have proven effective in distributing specific messages such as agriculture techniques, when used in close conjunction with an overall project design. Secondly, Potts says, films can be effective as a means for recording and preserving history and the cultural traditions of a region and its people.

It is these specific areas in which Potts feels film can be a most effective communication tool. He concentrates on discussing implementation problem areas for film in these capacities and does not discuss the use of film as a means for providing "fundamental" or non-formal education on a regular basis to the mass of the people. This purpose, he feels, can be better served through other communication media, such as television, radio or other less expensive media.

Potts underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity to the needs of a specific region. It is this understanding that can provide a base of continuity for film use in development. In past experiences films from foreign sources have been partially successful in reaching rural African populations. But in every case, Potts feels, foreign expertise must be coupled with extensive understanding of an area. The most desirable situation would be for foreign film-makers and technicians to work with local participants in training exercises and technicians to work with local participants in training exercises and technical familiarization. This sort of long-term training program could be a much more productive expenditure of European time

and money than merely donating film-making equipment that eventually finds its way unused to the back of storage cabinets.

Especially in development films in which an "advanced" or at least unfamiliar medical or technical method is being introduced to an area, it is important that the message be couched in terms familiar to the audience. The new idea may in fact come from distant and foreign research agencies, but its acceptance is dependent upon an audience convinced that the idea has a direct application to them. An outside film-maker without close consultation with people of the area might never find the key with which to get his point across.

When film is used as a means for recording history and preserving cultural traditions, Potts is of a slightly different persuasion. In this case he feels the perspective of an outsider might be necessary to recognize the uniqueness of much of the cultural environment. A local film-maker, whose total perspective might be the growth and development of the country, may not have the needed perspective to value the beauty of his traditions.

A Look at Practical Issues

Experience in Ethiopia has led Potts to question in part some of the standard and new assumptions of film research. He believes, for instance, that color is more suitable in general for uneducated people and illiterates than black and white. A black and white film on cattle grazing for some of the semi-nomadic peoples of Ethiopia would be an abstraction because these people are "acute observers" of nature. Films for agriculture are better in color because plant diseases, or ripeness of coffee beans, can be better distinguished by color. According to Potts, the subject matter will determine when to use color, and he points out that researchers, on the whole, fail to make this distinction.

Film people have been debating the use of sound for film. The author examines the various opinions — from no sound track, just on-the-spot narration, to double band systems and magnetic strip. He offers no clue to his own preference.

Contrary to opinions expressed elsewhere in this newsletter on the matter of whether people in rural areas have greater difficulty than those in urban areas understanding visual information given in a film, Potts is "inclined to think that the problem is exaggerated. The evidence and observation of communication researchers are not supported by practical film-makers." Potts also believes that the "cinematic language can be learned even by people with little or no experience of visual media." He does not support the use of the "more extreme techniques of modern Western advertising or entertainment films which certainly can be confusing." Film-makers must be aware of techniques to use for rural audiences, but Potts wonders whether these techniques have to be so simple as some have advocated. He states: "the problem of visual literacy is not theirs, it is the problem of the film-makers. . ." The idea of an African cinematic technique is questioned by Potts because he "always thought that film and cinematic techniques were international."

Guidelines

Potts' guidelines for the use of film for development are rooted in practical common sense. His general thesis might be: use film to supplement and enhance the original environment; do not use it to experiment with highly artistic techniques. He says: use color because people see in color and are more inclined to internalize messages so presented; use sound when it serves a specific purpose, words when they explain, music when it is a part of the natural environment; film real objects (not animation) in typical settings familiar to the audience. ■ Karen S. Frank

The Gap Between Hungry Mouths and Celluloid

The Center for the Development of Instructional Technology (CENDIT) has recently published *A Study of the Effectiveness of Films on Innovative Agricultural Practices* (Rajivex Jain, Prabhakar Janhari, Varendra Rana, Ved Prakash Saxena, Anisl Srivastava. Center for the Development of Instructional Technology, 3 Birbal Marg, Jangupura Extension, New Delhi 110 014 India, 1975. 116 pages plus appendices, cost unknown.)

A multi-disciplinary team of researchers began this study with a brutally honest statement of the gulf between middle class researchers (and film-makers) and the rural dwellers they were serving:

> Many of us in the well-fed elite classes have, however, hopelessly dulled our minds to the images of poverty and hunger in the environment. . . So the question before us was "how effectively could certain other types of images (films) be used to bridge this gap between empty bellies and empty minds"?" Or would they only substitute a different gap, this time between hungry mouths and celluloid?

In order to answer these questions, the researchers selected eight Indian government films which reflected the entire range of intentions, formats and settings which government film-makers had employed.

The researchers found that the films' effects varied greatly in information transfer, information retention, perception and comprehension, induced actions, and other measures. Common to most of the films was the inclusion of too much information to be handled in one viewing. The researchers also found that much of the information included was

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either too theoretical, or irrelevant to the audiences' real needs. Villagers' ability to learn from the films correlated with education level, familiarity with the use of new practices and age, but not with caste, occupation, travel, past media exposure or past contact with government officials.

While it is not possible to list here the specific responses to the film, I will note the degree of understanding of their own problems the villagers showed. The researchers cited several cases where the villagers could have given the film-makers some very valuable advice.

After seeing a film on new agricultural tools, six respondents said that they would not like to go to the store for these tools, because they lacked the necessary cash or credit to purchase them. Others stated that such purchases would do no good without other inputs like electricity, new seeds and fertilizer.

Several other examples are cited where the film-makers could have benefited from dialogue with their audience during the film-making process. Interviews conducted with the film-makers revealed that the films had been conceived in isolation from the audience and its felt needs, and that none of the film-makers had even screened the films before members of the target audience.

The researchers suggest that one cause of this lack of communication between the communicators and the audience may be the film technology which is employed. India produces its agricultural films on highly professional and costly thirty-five millimeter equipment. This demands large film crews, and limits the film-makers' ability to film non-actors in candid situations. The researchers expressed the opinion that imported western "high technology" had not solved, but exacerbated, problems of poverty in India. They feel that truly effective films will emerge only from a decentralized system of production and exhibition. Grass-roots participation in the entire film-making process is essential to success.

Reports reaching us suggest that much of the spirit evident in this excellent study has been incorporated into the SITE satellite television project. Audience profiles and needs assessments have been conducted before program production. Programs have apparently been pretested and revised before airing. Portable videotape equipment has apparently been used to tape at the village level with village participation. It would indeed be encouraging if a major application of the most centralized communication tool of our time — the satellite — saw fit to decentralize production and to attend to grass roots communication needs. Perhaps there is reason to believe that past deficiencies in media production, so honestly pinpointed in this study, are on their way toward becoming historical curiosities. ■ J.G.

Common Sense Evaluation

Professor John M. Kennedy of Scarborough College at the University of Toronto has written a paper entitled *On the Evaluation of a Film* which should be useful to producers of films for development. The paper is available free of charge from *ICIT*.

Educational media producers everywhere give lip service to the importance of incorporating evaluation into media production. It is generally acknowledged that the creative intuition of scriptwriters and film directors is not sufficient to guarantee effective educational communication, although it may produce great art and entertainment films. Nonetheless, educational films continue to be produced without the benefit of scientific evaluation during the scriptwriting, shooting and editing process. One observer of the American educational scene (Kenneth Komoski) has calculated that less than 1% of the films and videotapes used in American schools were subjected to pretesting or formative evaluation before final editing, printing and distribution.

Why is this the case? Film-makers seem to feel that evaluation is a costly process and seem to resent the intrusion of scientific processes into what they regard as an art form. In view of the work of Professor Kennedy, the Children's Television Workshop and others, we feel that this rejection of pretesting and formative evaluation is no longer a defensible position.

Professor Kennedy's paper offers a number of wonderfully simple common sense measures which can be taken during the process of film production in order to increase the impact and effectiveness of a film. The first step is to work with the film director to derive a profile of the important messages contained in the film. Next, several tests are given to determine how attentive the test-audience was, how effective the film communicated, how well the test-audience remembered the messages, what degree of emotional impact the test-audience felt and what actions were taken as a result of viewing the film.

The measures described in this paper do not call for the high level resources usually associated with evaluation: no computers and no Ph.D.s required! All that is required is common sense and a desire to produce effective film communication. Pretesting and formative evaluation are essential in the production of films for education and development. ■ J.G.

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